Charge Code Maps Across the DC Criminal Justice System

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Caution

- This is a work in progress

- Worked on between projects

- There are many projects to work on

- Unable to commit to a finish date

- Will be happy to pass findings along as they become available

Charge Code Lists Thanks To:

- Raymond E. Wickline, MPD for CJIS

- James Zepp, PhD for NCIC link

- Annesley Schmidt & Debbie Grafton,
  for complete DC Superior Court old and new codes

- Kim Hunt, PhD,
  DC Sentencing Commission for current official understanding of felony and misdemeanor crimes

Introduction

- The JACCS code table is a drop down menu with 6181 charge codes

- Data entry is inefficient

- Only 374 charge codes are actually used

Objective

- Simplify data entry

- Improve data quality

- Update charge table

- Verify accuracy of information

- Use charge code categories that map to those commonly used in the Criminal Justice System

Approach

- Examine existing charge classification systems

- Map charges, and

- Generate basis set of smallest size that covers all charges

Charge Classification Systems

- NCIC used in Uniform Crime Reporting espoused by DOJ

- CJIS used by MPD

- DC Superior Court Charge Codes

- US District Court Charge Codes

- Legacy CRISYS charge codes

- Sentencing Commission Data

Began Examining Code Table

- DOC Charge Codes are inherited from each major charge code classification except NCIC

- All classification systems agree upon the 44 major categories of crime

- Wide variation on further classification

- Lack of clarity regarding misdemeanor/felony designation

General Observations

- Classification Systems evolved to address different constituencies

- Each Classification System works well for the parent constituency

- The criminal justice system lacks common language to discuss charge details

General Observations

- ## NCIC:

  – Cares about who (Man, Woman, Boy, Girl) and the nature of the weapon if weapon present

- ## CJIS:

  – Cares about the broad category

General Observations

- DC Superior Court:

  – Cares about intent, complicity, degree, and heinousness, and number of repeat offenses

- USDC:

  – Cares about who (e.g. Federal Official, family of federal official),

  – where, and

  – extent (groups dollar amounts and ages differently than DC Superior Court for similar class of crimes)

Homicide

- A total of 59 distinct charges exist in this category

  - 14 NCIC Codes, only 3 apply

  - 5 CJIS classes, all apply

  - 18 USDC Codes, only some represented in data

  - 30 Superior Court Codes…old and new systems, most represented in data

Homicide

- Very different philosophy on categorization, e.g. Vehicular Homicide

  – NCIC cares only that a vehicle was used

  – CJIS also general and not specific

  – Superior Court cares about who was killed, intent of accused, and presence of aggravating circumstances

  – Unclear about USDC distinctions

Rape/Sexual Abuse

- Similar disconnect between maps
  - 18 NCIC categories, 3 apply
  - 72 Old Superior Court Categories collapse into 39 new Superior Court Categories, only 4 map to NCIC classes, 2 to the same NCIC class
  - 10 USDC classes
  - 10 CJIS classes (distinct from USDC classes)

Rape/Sexual Abuse

- Widely different thinking:
  - NCIC child sexual abuse cares about sex of child, nature of weapon used if any,
  - USDC cares about age of child,
  - Superior Court about repeat occurrences, gravity of offense, and aggravating circumstances

Robbery

- No surprises, more of the same
  - NCIC 13 categories, cares about street, residential, business, no weapon, weapon used, strong arm, banks, carjacking
  - 16 CJIS categories, many to one correspondence with NCIC categories
  - 20 Old Superior Court classes, 10 new classes
  - Lack of 1-1 correspondence with categories for NCIC and CJIS

1-1 Correspondence Non-existent

- Between
  - NCIC charges and CJIS charges
  - CJIS charges and DC Superior Court charges
  - DC Superior Court charges and USDC charges
  - USDC charges and NCIC charges
  - DC Superior Court Charges and NCIC charges
  - USDC charges and CJIS charges
  - All of the above and CRISYS charges

Additional Difficulties with Data

- DC Superior Court charge codes not listed on court documents

- Assigned case numbers do not always correspond to processed charges

- Plea downs and dropped charges cause this

- DC Criminal Justice System lacks a Common Key to map records (PDID not applicable to all cases)

Data Difficulties Continued

- Databases not updated real-time, not in synch

- Paperwork is batched through out the system, databases 3-5 days out synch

- Manual data entry

- Many text fields, mapping difficult

- Electronic data verification not possible

Script Checks?

- DC DOC has implemented script checks now and is reviewing logic of all business critical and commonly used scripts

- This must be repeated regularly with each database version upgrade and each change in procedure

- Requires much time, effort, attention to detail, and the patience of saints

Issues

- Legitimate concerns around
  - ownership of data and analysis
  - sensitivity of information content, and
  - space to work through data issues
- Lack of common language hinders segmentation and analysis across system
- Affects agencies downstream of court disproportionately
- Prevents global analysis of flow of individuals through Criminal Justice System

Impact on Analysis

- Unable to apply anything but the most basic mathematics to forecasting and analysis

- Quality, accuracy, and robustness of analysis not math/analytics, but data limited

- Data Analysis downstream of Courts complex and difficult

DOC Steps

- Implement continuous data quality improvement

- Verify internal data against external source data

- Map data from source documents to internal data bases

- Learn about existing systems and capture missing data elements correctly

- Work towards a common understanding with others

Continuous Data Quality Improvement at DOC

- Accept that human beings enter and process data and write scripts. Errors will happen.

- Implement appropriate automated data rectification.

- Check script logic regularly within/across systems.

Continuous Data Quality Improvement at DOC

- Generate mismatched datasets regularly and resolve mismatches.

- Map data flow/correspondence within/across system.

- Re-engineer data processing to minimize data errors.

- Be curious and willing to learn the data in all it's complexity.

Patience and Persistence at DOC

- Question method and content not intent

- Need all hands on deck to achieve good data quality

- Acknowledge other's ideas and perspective

Patience and Persistence at DOC

- Embrace ideas radically different than own

- Move forward in baby-steps, build confidence

- Celebrate small but real milestones